

Record made August 19, 1939 in the office of the Aycock & Lindsey turpentine camp, Cross City, Florida. [Textual Transcription]

RECORD 7

3527

(Record made August 19, 1939 in the office of the Aycock & Lindsey turpentine camp, Cross City, Florida. Stetson Kennedy interviewer; Robert Cook operator.)

Item:

1) James Griffin, (see Record 6, Item 2 for personal history), tells of serving three months at the Dixie County Prison Camp for not paying the lumber company for which he works for three months rent valued at \$50, which he said accumulated while he was ill.

He then describes a song which he called "Worked All Summer Long" and which originated at the prison camp. He says that it was his "theme song" which he usually sang in the afternoons about sundown.

He sings:

WORKED ALL SUMMER LONG

Worked all summer long, I didn't save my railroad fare, Hum... um... um... Worked all summer long, I didn't save my railroad fare. I ain't got no money, And my friends they don't even care.

Oh my dear mother, She prayed this prayer for me; My dear mother, She prayed this prayer for me. She said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, Wheresoever he may be.'

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Oh, when my friends told me, When I was working like a flea; Boys, when my friends told me, When I was working like a flea; Tell James he won't steal no more money, Ain't gonna be no rainy days; We'll please everybody While the sun is shinin high; Captain, we're pleasin everybody, While the sun is shinin high.

2

We will save our money (If I find it (?) No matter how. Yeah man!

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Item:

A 2) James Griffin (see Record 6, Item 2 for personal history) describes a song he made up and sung while being placed in jail on another occasion, for "jumping his board."

He sings:

RIGHT BACK IN JAIL AGAIN

Here I go, right back in jail again, Hum...um... Here I go, right back in jail again. I don't have any money, And I sure don't have no friends.

Harmony

3) Members of the "Dixie/Four" male Negro quartet are introduced: Ire Smith, age 28; L. G. Arnold, 25 Doc Choice, 34; S. T. Tatum, 26. The quartet sings in churches, at parties, etc. They tell of a jook joint, song, "Poor Stranger Blues." They answer questions about jook joints, and define them as "bar rooms", formerly known as "festival halls," "a name colored people give dance halls," etc. They think the term jook joint originated in sawmill camps. Jooks are described: "an outlaw place; don't nobody go there but outlaw people."

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The jook joint song is reported to have been heard in jook joints in Perry, Florida, and in Suwannee County, and in the Interstate Jook.

REVERSE

B1 4) "Poor Stranger Blues," a jook joint song, sung by the Dixie Harmony Four, a male Negro quartet:

Text taken from record;

POOR STRANGER BLUES

(Text taken from record; incomplete.)

I'm a stranger here, Jus blowed in-to town... I'm a stranger here, Jus blowed in-to town...

Some people like high yellers, But gimme my black and brown...

3

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Item:

B2 5) (reverse)

James Byrd, Negro turpentine worker, Cross City, Florida, age 30, gives a description of "JOE MOW, a good luck item usually including a lodestone, which is said to be helpful in winning at gambling games. Says James: "When you don't have a Joe Mow, there ain't nothin you can do. A Joe Mow is usually sumpum nother fixed up in a bag. You keep it in your right pocket, and rub it often.

3 6) Albert Spaulding, white, age 21, assistant manager of the commissary of a large turpentine camp, Cross City, Florida, tells of a Negro worker coming to the commissary

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and purchasing three eight-penny nails and a new paper bag to make a Joe Mow to keep under his pillow to keep the witches away.

4 7) James Byrd resumes his discussion of hants and Joe Mows. He says that good Joe Mows must be ordered from Louisiana or Mississippi. Says that some are made by Negro workers at the turpentine camp, and sold for \$2 each; but he doesn't believe in that kind.

5 8) Berry Johnson, Negro turpentine worker of Cross City, Florida, discusses ghosts and Joe Mows. (His voice may be identified by its stuttering.) Says he believes in the "spiritual kind" of ghosts. Reports being able to see ghosts "out there" most any time.

Reports that some Negroes at the turpentine camp sew up a corn cob in a piece of red flannel and call it a Joe Mow. It is worn around the waist, neck, or in the right pocket.

(His discussion continued on Record 8)

END OF RECORD